

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

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5 A multibeam scanning optical apparatus comprises a  
light source, an incident optical system, an optical  
deflector, a scanning optical system, a detection  
optical element, and a photodetector. A plurality of  
light beams modulated in accordance with information  
signals are emitted from the light source and lead to  
the optical deflector, typically a rotary polygon  
mirror, by way of the incident optical system,  
10 typically a collimator lens and a cylindrical lens.  
The light beams deflected by the optical deflector are  
then focussed on a surface to be scanned, typically a  
photosensitive drum, by way of the scanning optical  
system having an  $f\theta$  characteristic. Part of the  
15 deflected light beams are lead to the photodetector by  
way of the detection optical system in order to control  
the timing of the start of scanning so that the centers  
of the scanning areas of the plurality of light beams  
agree with each other on the surface to be scanned. In  
20 case of a color image forming apparatus comprising a  
plurality of scanning optical apparatus, the above  
control scheme can be applied even when the scanning  
optical apparatus have a single beam light source.

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